

The Wallace Collection announces Selldorf Architects to lead transformational masterplan

The Wallace Collection is pleased to announce that Selldorf Architects, in collaboration with Purcell and Lawson Ward Studio, has been appointed to lead the design and delivery of a transformational masterplan for Hertford House, the museum's historic home in London.



This ambitious project will reimagine and revitalise the museum's spaces for the 21st century, preserving the charm and unique character of the building while improving access, sustainability and visitor experience. The masterplan marks a significant investment in the long-term future of the museum and its ability to connect diverse audiences with one of the world's most remarkable art collections.

Selldorf Architects, renowned for their work with leading cultural institutions including The National Gallery, the recently reopened Frick Collection, and the Neue Galerie, will serve as Lead Design Architect. They are joined by Purcell, the UK's largest team of heritage architects and long-standing heritage consultants to the Wallace Collection, and Lawson Ward Studio, who developed the original project brief and who bring expertise in cultural learning environments – the practice being responsible for the recently opened Roden Centre for Creative Learning at the National Gallery.

Together, the team brings exceptional international experience in museum and gallery design, combined with a deep understanding of Hertford House and the operational needs of the Wallace Collection. Their joint appointment has been made under public procurement regulations and represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to re-visit the collection and its setting, and to enhance the experience for its friends and visitors.

The announcement comes in the Collection's 125th anniversary year and as it celebrates a number of significant milestones in public engagement. It recently welcomed over 500,000 visitors in a single year

for the first time, helped by the 2020 launch of an international lending programme that has extended the Collection's impact and contributed to a series of acclaimed exhibitions. Among these, *Frans Hals: The Male Portrait* brought together the artist's best male portraits from collections across the UK, Europe and North America. In 2023, *Portraits of Dogs: From Gainsborough to Hockney* proved hugely popular with audiences and last year, *Ranjit Singh: Sikh, Warrior, King* made an important contribution to extending the museum's audience. The forthcoming display of Caravaggio's *Victorious Cupid* (1601-02) – a major loan from Berlin's Gemäldegalerie and the first time the painting has been shown in the UK – will be another landmark moment, reinforcing the Collection's growing ambition and profile on the international stage.

The masterplan will address a wide range of priorities: from improving visitor welcome and circulation to enhancing gallery spaces, creating a new Learning Centre, upgrading environmental conditions and improving accessibility throughout the historic site. There is also potential to reimagine the museum's dedicated temporary exhibition space, restaurant and event facilities, and for critical improvements to be made to staff and back-of-house areas – all designed with sensitivity to the listed building and its distinctive character.

Director of the Wallace Collection, Dr Xavier Bray, said: *"The Wallace Collection occupies a unique place in the national and international museum landscape – an exceptional collection in an extraordinary historic home. We are delighted to be working with Selldorf Architects, Purcell and Lawson Ward Studio on the next chapter in the museum's history. Their thoughtful, collaborative approach and track record of working with complex heritage buildings gives us great confidence as we embark on this transformational journey."*

Annabelle Selldorf, Principal of Selldorf Architects, said: *"We are looking forward to working with the Wallace Collection to enhance the unique experience of visiting Hertford House, making their magnificent collection of paintings, decorative arts and arms and armour more accessible. Engaging a wider audience with art and the building's beautiful architecture is vital and the project presents an exciting opportunity to re-examine essential aspects of the visitor's experience. Bringing people closer to art matters to us and is a core part of our firm's work."*

The Wallace Collection's masterplan is currently in its early stages, with detailed design development, stakeholder engagement and technical surveys set to continue throughout 2025. A comprehensive fundraising campaign is being developed to realise the bold ambitions of the masterplan. The project aims to deliver an integrated and phased programme of works that will support the museum's evolving offer, public engagement ambitions and long-term sustainability goals.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

[IMAGES OF THE WALLACE COLLECTION CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE FOR MEDIA USE](#)

[IMAGES OF ANNABELLE SELLDORF CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE FOR MEDIA USE](#)

Photo credit: Martien Mulder courtesy of Selldorf Architects.

About the Wallace Collection

The Wallace Collection is a national museum housing unsurpassed masterpieces of painting, sculpture, furniture, arms and armour, and porcelain. The collection is displayed in a manner designed to evoke the lives and tastes of its founders, creating a special ambiance that remains an essential part of its charm. Built over the 18th and 19th centuries by the Marquesses of Hertford and Sir Richard Wallace, it is one of the finest and most celebrated collections in the world.

The collection was given to the British nation in 1897 by Lady Wallace, so that it could be kept together and enjoyed by generations of visitors. It was an astonishing bequest and one of the greatest gifts of artworks ever to be transferred into public ownership. Today, we care for the collection through research and conservation, and preserve it for future generations. Our aim is to share the collection with as broad an audience as possible.

The Collection is a non-departmental public body of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), led by Director Dr Xavier Bray and supported by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Prime Minister.

www.wallacecollection.org

Instagram: @wallacemuseum

Facebook: @wallacecollection

Twitter: @WallaceMuseum

YouTube: TheWallacecollection

About Selldorf Architects

Selldorf is a 65-person architectural design practice founded by Annabelle Selldorf in New York City in 1988. The firm creates public and private spaces that manifest a clear and modern sensibility to enduring impact. Since its inception, the firm's design ethos has been deeply rooted in the principles of humanism at every scale and for every condition Selldorf Architects designs for the individual experience. As a result, its work is brought to life – and made complete – by those who use it.

Selldorf recently completed the renovation and expansion of The Frick Collection in New York City and the enhancement of the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery, London. Other cultural clients include Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Art Gallery of Ontario, Luma Arles, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Shaker Museum, Clark Art Institute, and Neue Galerie New York. In addition, the firm has created numerous galleries for David Zwirner, Hauser & Wirth, and Thaddaeus Ropac among others, and designed exhibitions for Frick Madison, Frieze Masters, Gagosian, Corning Museum of Glass, and the Venice Art Biennale.

About Purcell

Purcell is an international practice of architects, masterplanners and heritage consultants, trusted for their expertise in understanding, conserving and reimagining the world's most significant historic places. They have advised the Wallace Collection for over two decades, delivering award-winning projects including the restoration of the museum's Great Gallery.

About Lawson Ward Studio

Lawson Ward Studio was founded in 2021 and is an architecture and design practice dedicated to the cultural sector. Their team led the development of the Wallace Collection's project brief and recently completed the National Gallery Roden Centre for Creative Learning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES

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